

Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare  
Period 6 Corrective Action Plan: Jeanine B. v. Doyle Settlement Agreement  
September 30, 2009

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Corrective Action Plan (CAP) identifies and describes the strategies the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW or the Bureau), working with its lead contract agencies, is taking, and plans to implement to address the following remaining enforceable Settlement Agreement provisions:

I.B.6 requires that at least 71% of children in BMCW custody who are reunified at the time of discharge from out-of-home care during Period 3, or thereafter, shall have been reunified within 12 months of entry into care.

I.D.7 requires the creation of Adolescent Diagnostic/Assessment Centers and limits the length of stay in Centers. The Bureau achieved compliance with the provision to create the Centers. During 2008, the Bureau did not meet the provision regarding time limits for stays in the Centers.

I.D.9 requires that 90% of children in the legal custody of the BMCW have no more than three out-of-home care placements.

In section II.D, the Bureau has also identified other related actions and quality initiatives that will be implemented as part of its continuing management and stewardship of the Bureau.

## **II. STRATEGIES FOR CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT AND COMPLIANCE**

The Bureau, in partnership with its lead contract agencies, will implement the following actions and strategies to address the remaining enforceable provisions.

### **A. Timely Reunification I.B.6**

This provision requires that at least 71% of children in BMCW custody who are reunified at the time of discharge from out-of-home care, shall have been reunified within 12 months of entry into care.

The Bureau's corrective strategies build on actions taken during 2007-2008 which include: revision to the ASFA curriculum for ongoing case managers, updated training for case management staff and supervisors to clarify ASFA requirements, implementation of internal permanency staffings convened by State employed staff to focus on expediting permanency for children. Staffings will be convened for children in care more than nine months.

The Bureau will continue or implement the following actions:

- 1) As part of our continuing focus on expediting permanency for children, the Bureau will continue to plan and implement internal permanency staffings of

all children in care at least nine months and beyond, to identify barriers to permanency being achieved, to discuss resolution of those barriers. Assigned Program Evaluation Managers will track all cases until permanency is achieved. The PEMs are responsible for tracking the follow up and implementation of issues identified during the staffings.

Continue implementation of revised case practice and Children's Court processes to accommodate a comprehensive approach to family assessment. New casework practice provides for a renewed focus on child safety and ensuring the basis for intervention remains the center for all activities and decisions related to family reunification. Increased precision related to safety intervention provides for: children to be safely and appropriately maintained in home, timely reunification with caregivers, or timely and accurate identification of an alternative permanency option.

- a. The Bureau will finalize and distribute Bureau policy and procedure related to these changes by October 8, 2009.
  - b. The Bureau will work with the court to issue a judicial directive regarding the comprehensive assessment process and court changes by October 1, 2009.
- 3) Conduct an analysis of cases where children were reunified between months 13 through 15 to identify systemic or other barriers to earlier reunification. The Bureau will use this information to develop further corrective actions.
  - 4) Maintain a total of eleven permanency consultants, and one supervisor.

#### **B. Length of Stay in Adolescent Assessment Centers (I.D.7)**

Provision I.D.7 requires the creation of Adolescent Diagnostic/Assessment Centers, and limits the length of stay in centers. Placement in centers cannot exceed 60 days for pre-disposition cases; and cannot exceed 20 days for children whose CHIPS case has reached disposition.

Adolescent Assessment Centers were created in December 2003.

The Bureau will take the following actions:

- 1) Conduct internal specialized placement staffings for adolescents who are placed in an adolescent assessment center or a placement stabilization center, or who experienced a third placement within the previous 12 months. This staffing will be held within 10 business days of the placement. The purpose of the staffing for newly placed adolescents is to assess child and family circumstances, service and placement needs, and permanency goals; and to identify action steps to stabilize placements, provide necessary services and achieve permanency goals. The purpose of the staffing for children experiencing a third placement within 12 months is to evaluate the factors which led to the placement disruption and to identify services needed to minimize future disruptions and to stabilize placement.

Required participants for specialized staffings for newly placed youth: assigned case manager, supervisor, program manager, and foster placement supervisor.

Required participants for specialized staffings for adolescents experiencing a third placement within 12 months: assigned case manager, supervisor, program manager, clinical foster placement supervisor and the CEO or Chief Operating Officer of the case management agency.

- 2) Continue identifying the needs of the children who are placed in the adolescent assessment and placement stabilization centers, determining whether there are alternative approaches to assess their needs, and developing specific programs, services and placements to eliminate the needs for these centers.
- 3) Explore with the Children's Court, the District Attorney's Office, the Guardian Ad Litem Office, and the Public Defender's Office streamlining approval of placement changes by consent motion when all parties agree with the planned move for the child.

### **C. Placement Stability of Children in Out of Home Care (I.D.9)**

Provision I.D.9 requires 90% of children in out of home care have no more than three out of home placements.

In an effort to promote placement stability for children in out of home care, the Bureau will take the following actions:

- 1) The Bureau will develop an implementation plan by October 15, 2009 as to how it will make diligent and good faith efforts to implement the recommendations of the May 29, 2009 expert Study of Service, Support, and Placement Needs.
- 2) The Bureau will develop an implementation plan by October 15, 2009 as to how it will make diligent and good faith efforts to implement the recommendations of the July 29, 2009 expert Foster Care Recruitment and Retention Plan.
- 3) By September 30, 2010, the Bureau will increase the number of foster homes<sup>1</sup> by a net gain of at least 185 homes, for a total of 875 homes. Due to the need to increase the number of foster home placements for infants and adolescents, the Bureau will place emphasis on the recruitment and licensing of foster homes to meet the placement needs for these age groups.
- 4) Maintain Relative Coordinator positions in each region to assist case managers in providing support to unlicensed relatives caring for children who are on a CHIPS court order.

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<sup>1</sup> As used here, "new foster homes" will not include existing kinship homes newly licensed only to care for BMCW children already placed in their care.

- 5) Maintain expansion of MUTT for foster parents program to include unlicensed relatives caring for children on a CHIPS court order; to provide interventions to address the behavior and crisis needs of children during the evening and after-hours when the Bureau office is closed.

#### **D. Other Initiatives**

The Bureau will maintain its focus and commitment to its child welfare workforce initiative activities.

The Bureau will continue its support of staff educational advancement as described in the 2007 CAP, including the part-time Master of Social Work (MSW) programs evening courses at reduced tuition for Bureau staff pursuing an MSW degree at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; and stipends for the full-time MSW program.

In CY 2010, the Bureau will implement new pay schedules and career ladders for ongoing case managers, mentors and supervisors to be more competitive within the southeastern Wisconsin child welfare market.

The full implementation of Training Teams will continue in all programs across all three Regions. Training Teams operationalize a competency based approach assuring new staff the opportunity to develop their skill and knowledge in a deliberate, sequenced, and progressive manner. All trainee activities on the Training Team will be conducted under close supervision of the training team supervisor ensuring that child safety during staff development always remains the paramount concern.

The Bureau will continue participation in the statewide Qualitative Service Review (QSR). The next QSR of Milwaukee will be in fall 2009.

The Bureau will ensure the initial health screen includes a developmentally appropriate mental health screen conducted by a qualified professional. Based on results of the mental health screen, BMCW will ensure follow up services are provided to address the child's needs.

The Bureau will provide Plaintiffs all investigations of maltreatment in out-of-home care, including Independent Investigations on licensed care providers and Initial Assessment CPS reports on unlicensed relative caregivers, for review quarterly. Such confidential disclosures to Plaintiffs will be for monitoring purposes only (per Settlement Agreement § V.A.) of released Settlement Agreement § I.C.1., and may not be used for any evidentiary or liability purposes in this case or any other matter.

As part of its continuing management and stewardship of the Bureau, the Bureau is in the process of implementing quality initiatives to strengthen day-to-day practice across all program areas.

### **III. EVALUATION OF PROGRESS AND FOLLOW UP**

All proposed strategies will be formally tracked and analyzed by the Department of Children and Families Office of Performance and Quality Assurance and reported

monthly to Plaintiffs' counsel as agreed upon by the parties. The Office will review this CAP and make recommendations on appropriate reports to Department management and plaintiffs' counsel.

Conference calls will be scheduled at the convenience of both parties to discuss CAP report items, and to respond to any questions or areas of concern. As has been the established practice, the Bureau will promptly follow up and respond to questions or requests for additional information from plaintiffs' counsel.

The Bureau will also continue to report on the progress of achieving permanency for the remaining named plaintiff child, and to submit quarterly case file documentation regarding the child.